

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of the present patent application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks. Claims 1, 2, 9 and 11-13 are amended, claim 17 is added, and no claims are canceled in this paper. Claims 1-17 are now pending in the application.

The final Office Action dated September 19, 2005, included a rejection of claims 16 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph as purportedly failing to comply with the enablement requirement. Claims 1-3, 5-6, 8-9, 11 and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) in view of U.S. Patent 5,592,508 (Cooper) and further in view of U.S. Patent 6,215,737 (Thagard). Claims 12 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) in view of U.S. Patent 5,774,567 (Heyl) and further in view of the Thagard patent. Claims 4 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) in view of the Cooper patent and further in view of the Thagard patent and yet further in view of U.S. Patent 6,052,471 (Van Ryzin). Claim 7 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) in view of the Cooper patent and further in view of the Thagard patent and yet further in view of the Heyl patent. Claims 14 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) in view of the Cooper patent and further in view of the Thagard patent and yet further in view of U.S. Patent 5,153,592 (Fairchild).

It is respectfully submitted that these rejections have been overcome in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks.

35 U.S.C. §112, First Paragraph Rejection

Claim 16 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as allegedly failing to comply with the enablement requirement. It is noted with appreciation that the §112, first paragraph rejection of claim 16 was withdrawn by the Advisory Action dated December 8, 2005.

***§103 Rejections in view of various Hypothetical Combinations of
Cooper / Thagard / Heyl / Van Ryzin / Fairchild***

The §103 rejections of claims 1-16 in view of various hypothetical combinations of Cooper, Thagard, Heyl, Van Ryzin, and Fairchild are obviated by the present amendments.

It is believed that the claims distinguish over the asserted art for at least the reasons set forth in the previous responses. However, in an effort to hasten the prosecution of the application, this paper includes various amendments to the independent claims. For example, claim 1 is amended to now recite that the “plurality of audio digital-to-analog converters configured as part of the personal computer system.” Claim 2 is amended to recite “wherein said means ... is configured as part of the personal computer system.” Claim 12 is amended to recite “wherein at least some of said plurality of digital audio converters are configured as part of said personal computer system.” Claims 9, 11 and 13 were amended to attend to antecedent basis issues. The claims have been amended by this paper in a good faith effort to hasten the prosecution of the application. In the event the Office adopts the position that the claim amendments are made for purposes of patentability insomuch as to limit the scope of equivalents of the amended elements, it is requested that this position be set forth in the next paper to afford applicant the opportunity to respond to such a position.

Reply to Advisory Action dated December 8, 2005

Regarding the Advisory Action dated December 8, 2005, in this paper the Office stated that, since the features “personal computer” and “personal computer systems” only appear in the preamble, these features would not be accorded patentable weight. It is acknowledged that antecedent basis derived from the preamble is one factor which may be used in determining patentable weight. However, this is not the sole test for determining whether or not patentable weight is to be accorded to the preamble. Guidelines for determining whether or not features of the preamble have patentable weight are provided in the Manual of Patent Examining Procedure at MPEP 2111.02. In view of the guidelines set forth in the MPEP, it is respectfully submitted that the preambles of the claims pending before this amendment would properly be accorded patentable weight. Nonetheless, the present amendment even more clearly defines the invention for the purposes of examination. Accordingly, withdrawal of the pending rejections and a full examination on the merits is earnestly solicited.

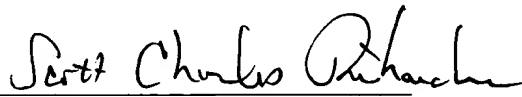
Deposit Account Authorization / Provisional Time Extension Petition

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this, concurrent and future replies, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 50-0439 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. However, should there remain any unresolved issues, the Examiner is kindly invited to contact applicant's representative, Scott Richardson, at telephone number 1.703.739.0573 so that such issues may be resolved as expeditiously as possible.

Respectfully submitted,



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